

ANGLICANS, LUTHERANS, AND HOMOSEXUALS

April 11, 1997 David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

The bishops of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa (Anglican) have publicly apologized to homosexual people "who have been hurt by the unacceptable prejudice" against gays and lesbians within the church (Ecumenical News International, March 12, 1997).

In a separate action, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Kingdom of the Netherlands (ELK) has announced that it will not take part in the next assembly of the World Council of Churches, in protest against Zimbabwe's "anti-homosexual campaign." The eighth general assembly of the WCC is scheduled to be held in Zimbabwe's capital, Harare, in September 1978. Zimbabwe's president, Robert Mugabe, has said that homosexuals are not welcome in his country, and he has compared their behavior with that of animals. The Evangelical Lutheran Church said it made this decision because "of the very unfavorable climate for homosexuals in Zimbabwe."

A spokesman for the ELK, Rene van den Berg, said his church "has a vision of homosexuality in the church. We accept gay relationships and we accept gay people as pastors. We would not feel free to send a delegate who is homosexual to the assembly."

The ELK is planning to merge with the Netherlands Reformed Church and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

When a homosexual rights group tried to set up a stand at the Harare Book Fair in 1995, Mugabe evicted them as "sodomists and sexual perverts." A group of 70 United States congressmen sent him a letter of condemnation, to which he gave reply, "Let the Americans keep their sodomy, bestiality, stupid and foolish ways to themselves, out of Zimbabwe" (Electronic Telegraph, Aug. 25, 1995). Mugabe reportedly told journalists: "We do not believe homosexuals have any rights at all. They can demonstrate, but if they come here, we will throw them in jail."